It was stated during the Budget Speech in July, 1996 that—

> "An interim non-statutory Insurance Regulatory Authority was set up in January, 1996. I now propose to introduce a Bill to make it a statutory body and to empower it suitably. When I return to the subject of insurance in the next Budget, I shall address some of the policy parameters outlined in the CMP, including the sequence of steps for the restructuring of the insurance industry."

The Government is currently processing a Bill for giving statutory status to the interim Insurance Regulatory Authority set up in January, 1996. However, it was reported that some sections of the employees of the insurance industry went on a 24-hour hunger strike on 27th November, 1996 protesting against the Government's reported move for privatisation of the insurance sector. It is also reported that a call for a day's strike is contemplated on the day following the date of introduction of the Bill in the Parliament for giving statutory status to the Insurance Regulatory Authority. It was reported by the LIC and the GIC that the strike on the 27th November, 1996 did not create any noticeable impact on the insurance industry.

Inviting Foreign Media Representatives to Visit Places of Tourist importance

1888. SHRI AHMED PATEL: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Department of Tourism invites representatives of media from abroad under its hospitality programme to visit various places of tourist importance located in the country;

(b) if so, what are the details of media representatives invited during the last three years and States where they were taken for visit, year-wise;

(c) whether this has helped in promoting tourism in the country; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA): (a) to (d) The Department of Tourism invites travel writers, journalists, TV teams, travel agents, decision-makers, etc. under its hospitality programme which includes release of Mandatory Order Passages on Air India and Indian Airlines. The number of such guests who were invited from abroad during the last 3 years is as follows:

Year	No. of guests
1993-94	970
1994-95	1551
1995-96	852

These guests were invited to visit the major tourist attractions in different States and Union Territories. This programme has helped in promoting tourism to India as the media guest produce films and write articles on their return. This has resulted in increased tourist arrivals and foreign exchange earnings.

Proposal of Gujarat for Conversion of TV Transmitters

1889. SHRIMATI URMILABEN CHIMANBHAI PATEL:
SHRIMATI ANANDIBEN JETHABHAI PATEL:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have received proposal from the Government of Gujarat to convert LPT Bhuj into HPT.

(b) whether the Government of Gujarat has also requested for the change of location of the HPT. Dwarka to another suitable site;